

MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

MY VOICE MATTERS IN RESEARCH

This module shares the creative solutions and innovations developed by young people. These ideas highlight new ways to make mental health research and services more inclusive and accessible for underrepresented young people. Moving from insight to action, we invite you to explore how these co-created innovations can be applied in your own work – from shaping research design and funding decisions to creating environments where young people can stay engaged for the long term. Together, these ideas offer practical steps toward lasting, meaningful change.

Here, we have drawn out some of the practical solutions to involvement and engagement that the young people offered through the eyes of the characters they created.

Kaya



"It's about asking the right questions and making sure we're speaking about the right topics."

"I'm not doing this for free – time is money."

Click [here](#) to listen to the audio insights from the group of young people with experience in the justice system who co-created Kaya. This piece lasts around 2 minutes.

Tara



"There should be a therapist for her there while doing the research."

"We can do something more entertaining, like we can make this research take place somewhere else, in a more open area."

Click [here](#) to listen to the audio insights from the group of young people from Global Majority communities who co-created Tara. This piece lasts around 2 minutes.

Cat



"Learn how to communicate with them – paper, whiteboards, talking iPads."

"Please send them pictures, so then you know what the person looks like, so then you don't have to panic."

Click [here](#) to listen to the audio insights from the group of neurodiverse young people who co-created Cat, alongside adults who support them. This piece lasts around 2 minutes.

Harry



"It's easier to be more vulnerable with less people."

"When you create a space that's visually a safe space for queer people, they're a lot more open to expressing themselves more."

Click [here](#) to listen to the audio insights from the group of LGBTQIA+ young people who co-created Harry. This piece lasts around 2 minutes.

Practical innovations – such as using familiar spaces, clear introductions, and allowing trusted companions – can help improve young people's participation in mental health research. Providing supports like food, reimbursement, and therapeutic presence can help remove barriers and increase engagement. These solutions create experiences that are more accessible, inclusive, and responsive to young people's needs.

We would like to thank the young people for their contributions, and everyone who helped make the workshops possible.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Based on the solutions shared by these young people, what practical steps could you take in your own work to ensure people like Kaya, Tara, Cat and Harry can participate comfortably and confidently in research?

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people suggested solutions to make mental health research more inclusive, accessible, and engaging.

Use safe, familiar spaces.

Holding sessions in spaces young people feel comfortable in reduces anxiety and supports participation.

Provide support and reassurance.

Enabling familiar support and comfort objects can help young people feel secure.

Make sessions engaging and flexible.

Plan varied activities and flexible pacing so participants feel at ease and engaged.

Offer practical incentives.

Provide practical support like travel, food, or financial reimbursement to remove barriers and show respect for participants' time.

IN SUMMARY | MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

By putting these practical solutions into action – such as offering engaging sessions in supportive environments, with fair reimbursement – we can make change happen, creating research that is truly inclusive for young people.